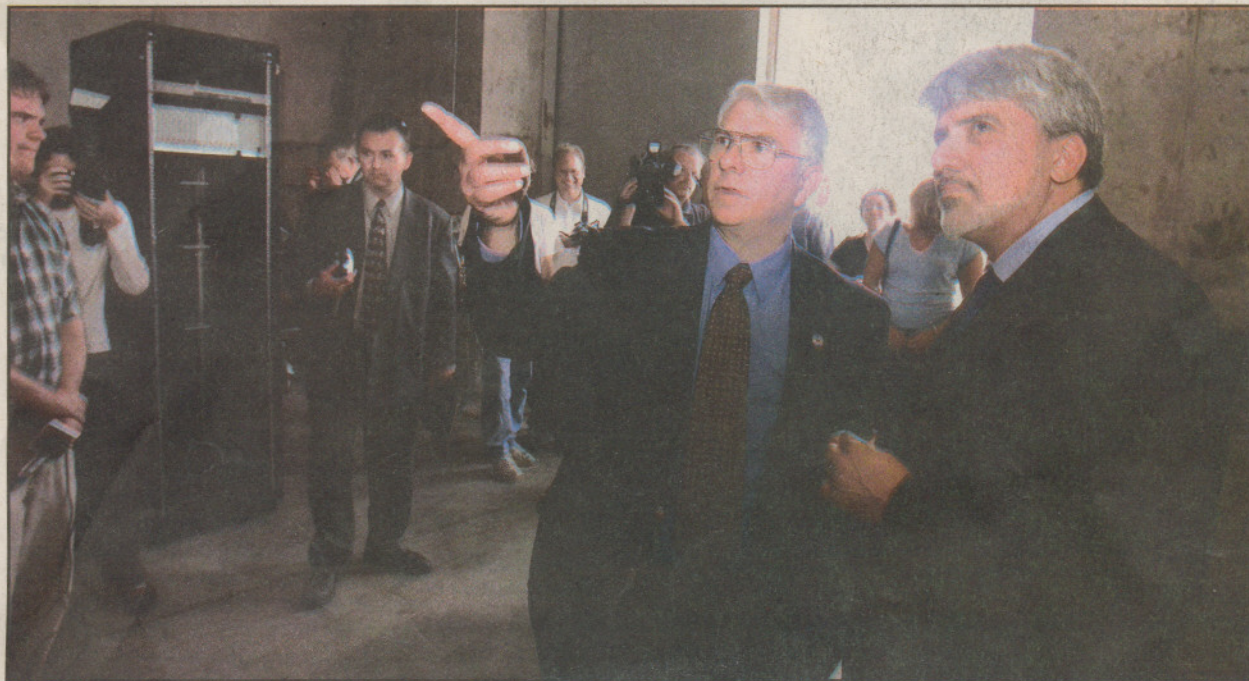


# Savanna depot plans could net 2,000 jobs

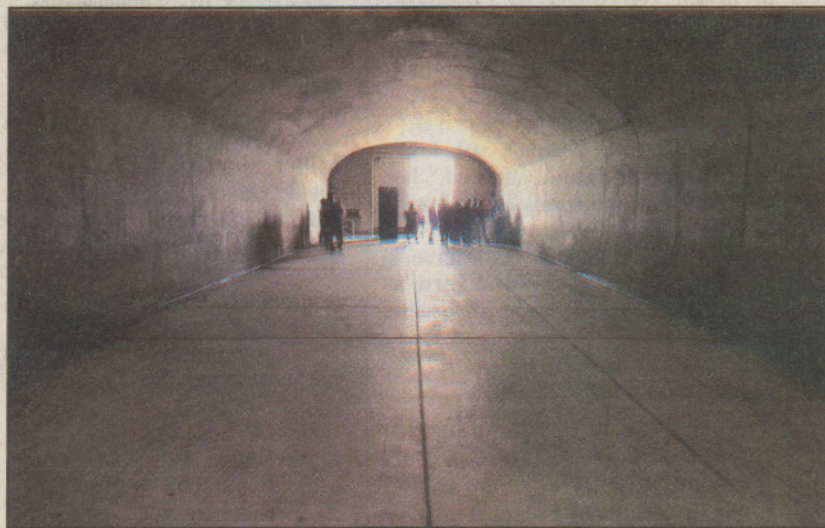


PHOTOS BY KEVIN E. SCHMIDT / THE JOURNAL-STANDARD

**Surrounded by members of the media, U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, R-Egan, center, talks to President and CEO of Savanna Depot Technologies Corporation Louis Goikas on Monday morning inside one of the "igloos" at the former Savanna Army Depot. Goikas is developing a new on-site business to host a highly secure Information Technology infrastructure at the depot.**

## Manzullo, entrepreneurs announce business plan for data storage company at depot meeting

**BY NATHAN LEGUE**  
The Journal-Standard



**The structures referred to as igloos are specially designed steel-reinforced concrete structures, which were formerly used to store explosive ordnances for the military.**

SAVANNA — Plans to use 400 vacant ammunition bunkers to generate as many as 2,000 high-tech jobs gained a higher profile Monday at the former Savanna Army Depot.

U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, R-Egan, and several business representatives touted an entrepreneur's hopes to start a secure "server farm," which would use the depot's infrastructure to store data for financial institutions, during a press conference and tour.

Louis Goikas, president and CEO of Savanna Depot Technologies Corporation, formerly worked for IBM's data management division and wants to bring that know-how to this remote site. He believes the complex



## DEPOT

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of 60-foot-long bunkers built to safely store artillery rounds under a two-foot layer of topsoil would be ideal data warehouses for corporations interested in keeping data secret, more than 300 miles away from their primary locations.

"There are a number of companies that provide managed hosting in the U.S.," Goikas said. "I don't know of any other sites like this. This is a Sept. 11-type business."

Goikas estimates technician jobs created to manage servers will garner \$15 an hour in wages. He's already received numerous unsolicited resumes and hopes to hire 150 employees by next March. His staff projections call for 2,010 employees by August 2006.

For a region struggling with high unemployment, it's welcome news. Dozens of media representatives and local residents turned out to hear about the plans.

"There's no one that's brought 2,000 jobs to the area in years and years, not since World War II," said Dave Murphy, a Savanna native who now lives in Warren.

Although there already are companies that provide off-site

data storage to major corporations, few are able to segregate their customer's equipment into separate buildings. Goikas believes each bunker will provide secure, private storage for one customer.

Besides know-how, Goikas also brings contacts throughout the industry. On Monday he was flanked by representatives from three corporations interested in the project.

"You've got a lot going for you right here," said R. David Kelley, president of Kvaerner Process Services, a subsidiary of an Anglo-Norwegian shipping and natural resources conglomerate. "You've got the rail line, you've got the river, you've got political support. I think this (meeting) shows community support."

Manzullo has advocated a redeveloped depot, which closed in 2000 and took 450 jobs from the area. Shortly thereafter, he formed a team of officials from the U.S. Army and other federal agencies to work out a plan to clean up and find new uses for the 13,000-acre property.

"To one tragic loss of 450 jobs, you can take that and cry about it or you can get together and bring together the various teams and try to make something positive out of it," Manzullo

said. "And that's exactly what's happened with the various groups that are involved."

The largest stakeholder in the depot, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, hopes to turn 9,000 acres into a national wildlife preserve for eco-tourists. Because 360 of the depot's bunkers will be on what will become USFWS land, Manzullo was quick to point out the low environmental impact of using them for data storage.

Manzullo hopes Lost Mound National Wildlife Preserve will become a destination point for tourists interested in studying the ecology of the prairie and wetlands on the land. USFWS officials want to designate the site officially by September.

"Somewhere down the line, you're going to be looking at an Audubon magazine, you know where they advertise different areas for bird trips, etc.?" Manzullo said. "We're going to see this land here listed and that means people building hotels and people driving out here and people making investments. All part of the overall scheme to use this beautiful land."

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